

FACTS ABOUT VARIOUS INDEPENDENT ETHICS COMMISSIONS

All of the states have some sort of state ethics oversight entity, although jurisdiction of these entities varies. This research was limited to *independent ethics commissions* with jurisdiction over the legislature. Thus, not every state will be included in these findings.

- **Ten states do not have independent ethics commissions:** Arizona, Idaho, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Wyoming. External oversight can be provided through other state agencies such as the Office of the Secretary of State or Attorney General, or by a legislative committee.
- **Some states have ethics commissions that are created in the state's constitution:** See Colorado, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and Texas.
- **In two states, the commission can investigate, but matters are adjudicated by the ethics committee:** Alaska (Select Committee on Legislative Ethics) and Maine (Senate Committee on Conduct and Ethics or House Committee on Ethics).
- **In some states, the commission does not have jurisdiction over the legislature:**
Indiana - jurisdiction is only over the executive branch and administrative offices
Ohio - jurisdiction excludes the legislative and judicial branches
South Carolina - jurisdiction does not include legislators.
- **In some states, the commission is only over the financial disclosures of legislators, while code of conduct issues are handled by a committee:**
Delaware - commission handles financial disclosures, not the code of conduct
Iowa - legislators file financial disclosures with the board, but the board has no authority over legislators
Maryland - commission handles financial disclosure only, and the Maryland Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics has jurisdiction over legislator conflict of interest issues
Washington - financial disclosure is with the Public Disclosure Commission, and the Legislative Ethics Board enforces the ethics code.
- **Three states have an independent legislative ethics commission and an independent executive ethics commission with jurisdiction over the respective branches:** Illinois, Kentucky, and Washington.
- **In New Jersey, the Commission on Investigation has jurisdiction over the legislative and executive branches, and the Election Law Enforcement Commission has jurisdiction over disclosure and election issues.**
- **In North Carolina, the Board of Ethics has jurisdiction over the Executive Branch and consenting legislators. Executive Order No. 1, Section 4 invites legislators to participate. North Carolina also has a Joint Legislative Ethics Committee.**

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), www.ncsl.org